

twenty-six candidates this last year who ran for the Board of Aldermen, we recommended nine men, five Republicans and four Democrats, and succeeded in electing six, coming within one of securing the majority of the board in the second year of our organization. In addition to this the Association by a variety of methods has stirred up the citizens to a more serious consideration of its political duties and has forced the Democratic and Republican parties alike to consider more carefully the character of the men whom they nominate for public office. This is the first time in the history of our city when all voters had the opportunity of knowing in detail the qualifications and standing of the men for whom they were called upon to vote.

The value of this kind of publicity has been shown in many ways. It is commonly accepted that one source of petty graft in the Board of Aldermen has been in the matter of the carriage bills which they were allowed to incur, presumably while in pursuance of their city duties. The first publication of these bills showed that the total amount spent by thirteen aldermen was \$13,273. This item occasioned a great deal of unfavorable comment, and the following year the same board spent only \$3,513, showing a saving of about \$10,000 in this one item. The value of the organization has been shown in various other ways. For example, in certain districts before the primaries this year, party leaders urged the nomination for important office of certain desirable men on the ground that if nominated against other candidates who were less worthy, they would receive the endorsement of the Good Government Association, thus practically ensuring their election.

In addition to this work, dealing directly with candidates, we have attempted to stir up that somewhat disreputable class of citizens sometimes called the "Stay-at-home-voter." Our city is divided into twenty-five wards, and each ward into seven, eight or nine precincts, giving us in all one hundred and ninety-four precincts. From last year's voting list we checked the names of the men who did not vote, and sent to them a direct personal appeal, urging them to vote and to vote right, and to use their influence with their neighbors and friends who also refrained from voting last year. With each letter was enclosed a list of the names of all the men in the given precinct who did not vote at the previous election. This work came in for a good deal of favorable notice from the press and undoubtedly resulted in stirring up many negligent voters. The whole basis of this movement lies in the belief, confidently held by the officers of the Association that a majority of the citizens of Boston wish to see honest and capable men in control of the city.

BALTIMORE

THE REFORM LEAGUE

By SOLOMON BLUM, Johns Hopkins University.

This organization is noteworthy in many ways. Its existence for twenty years has been a continuous fight against political corruption in Baltimore

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city. Its history may be divided into three periods: First, from its organization, in 1885 to 1895, a period of discouragement and non-success in its conflict against the firmly entrenched Baltimore city and state ring. Second, in 1895, when the League led the great public revolt against corruption, which elected the Republican candidate for Governor and United States Senator. Third, from 1895 to date, a period of activity and watchfulness, which has resulted in the growth of a higher civic spirit in the selection of men of better caliber for municipal offices. The League does its work through ward clubs composed of members of the League, and through standing committees appointed by the general executive board. These include a committee on legislation, which promotes beneficial and opposes harmful legislation, a committee to "Detect, expose, and, so far as possible, correct all abuses and frauds in the registration of voters, and conduct of elections in Baltimore city," a committee on public officials, whose duty shall be to investigate the antecedents, character and conduct of public officers, or candidates or applicants for offices in or from Baltimore city; the committee of publication informs the public, through the press and otherwise, of the views and principles of the League, and all other matters deemed advisable by the said committee.

The campaign of 1895 was the most important in the League's history. It is not too much to say that to its activity and efficiency in stirring public sentiment in the city and state was largely due the overthrow of the powerful Democratic organization, and the growth of a healthy independence in State, and more particularly in municipal politics.

The League is a strictly non-partisan body. In its ranks are many of the strongest men in the city of both parties. It investigates the records of all candidates for offices of both parties. Probably the most important work is its investigation of election officials. A few figures may prove instructive. From 1895 to 1899 it prevented the appointment or caused the removal of two supervisors of elections and over one hundred judges and clerks of election, added to which it has prosecuted and convicted about one hundred election offenders. In 1901 seventeen judges were removed, two allowed to resign and eleven charges dismissed. In the same year out of seven hundred clerks seven were deemed undesirable, and five excused from service. In 1902 out of a total of two thousand two hundred and fifty appointees only twelve were found to be unfit. The League watches the registration of voters, and has prepared a list of three thousand six hundred persons who are disqualified from voting. The League has not confined its activities solely to the regulating the machinery of elections. The campaign of 1895 was waged on the issue of ballot law reform, and an improved Australian Ballot law resulted. The Democrats upon returning to power have modified the law, with the purpose of disfranchising the negro. The organization has opposed this upon the ground that it is simply a political device to maintain one party in power. A Corrupt Practices act, drawn up by the League, whose purpose it is to limit election expenditure of candidates, has been up to the present unsuccessful. In Baltimore city, where its influence is more directly felt, it has investigated the various departments with

salutary results. An investigation of the school board resulted in the selection of a non-partisan board of high character. It has made an exhaustive investigation of the police and straw bail evils, and has broken up both these practices, and in many other ways it has helped to purify the police force. While the tangible results of the League's activities have been great, probably still greater is the influence it has upon the two great parties, the press and the ever-increasing independent vote. The candidates and appointees have improved since 1895, and while the League is watchful citizens will not have the excuse of ignorance to offer for electing corrupt candidates. The League serves as a nucleus for the independent vote of the city. It now has about five hundred members, and its average total expenditure is less than \$5,000 per year. It is one more example of the influence that a few men well-organized and actuated by an unselfish spirit may exert.

CLEVELAND

MUNICIPAL ASSOCIATION

By F. E. STEVENS, ESQ., Secretary.

The Municipal Association of Cleveland was organized in the winter of 1896. Since then it has continuously applied itself to the work prescribed at the time of its formation. The founder and for a number of years the leader in the work of the Association was Harry A. Garfield, who now occupies the Chair of Political Jurisprudence of Princeton University. The practical conduct of the organization is undertaken by a committee of ten representative business and professional men, known as the Executive Committee. A secretary employed by the committee gives his entire time to the details of the work. The plan of control by the Executive Committee is a result of experience. Formerly many subjects now dealt with solely by this committee were referred to a larger committee less intimately related to the activities of the Association. But experience developed the fact that expeditious, positive and aggressive action could best be secured through the agency of a small committee familiar with municipal conditions and with the political forces creating them.

More than to any other object the Association has directed its attention to elections affecting municipal administration. Those who have given most of time and thought to the enterprise are increasingly convinced that elections, both primary and general, must receive vigorous attention from those who seek to improve civic conditions. Efforts to thwart corruptionists and to repair the havoc wrought by maladministration produce but small returns unless these efforts are directed toward the source of the evil—the choosing of officials at the polls. The Association has at all times insisted that good city government can be secured only by the placing in office of upright and capable officials. Its rather crude though unmistakable shibboleth is—"Citizens who want good government must vote for good men." It has urged independent voting in municipal affairs. No attempt has been made to create a third or citizens' party, but the belief has been strength-